

TREATISE *on* DISCIPLINE IN THE PATH *of* THE SEEKER

رِسَالَةُ آدَابِ سُلُوكِ الْمُتَرِيدِ

Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi Al-Haddad

al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini
May Allah, the Exalted have mercy upon him



مَقَامُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَدَّادِ
تَرْجُومَةُ
الْحَاوِي
ت: ١٥٩٤٤
بَنِي قَلْبِي لَا يَقْضِي إِلَّا السُّوْيَ وَشُكْرِي

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Our master, the arranger of the Ratib,
Imam ‘Abdullah bin ‘Alawi Al-Haddad, said in his book
entitled “The Book of Assistance”;

“Every believer should protect his beliefs by learning the
creed of one of the leading scholars, about whose dignity
and firm establishment in scholarship no differences exist.”

رسالة آداب سلوك المُريد

لِلإِمَامِ شَيْخِ الْإِسْلَامِ قُطْبِ الدَّعْوَةِ وَالْإِرْشَادِ

الْحَبِيبِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَلَوِي الْحَدَّادِ

الْحَضَرَمِيِّ الشَّافِعِيِّ الْحُسَيْنِيِّ

رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

لِلإِمَامِ الْحَدَّادِ

الْحَضَرَمِيِّ الشَّافِعِيِّ الْحُسَيْنِيِّ

رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

Front Cover showing the restored front door entrance to
Imam Alhadad House in Hawi Tarim Hadhramaut Yemen

Treatises on Discipline in The Path of the Seeker

By the Imam, al-Sheikh of Islam,
the Pivot of Dakwah, the Guiding Light
the Beloved Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad
al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini
May Allah, the Exalted have mercy upon him

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by
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by
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Arrangement and comments

By

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Contents

1.	Introduction and Biography of Imam al-Haddad	5
2.	Preface	9
3.	Chapter 1 - The Beginning	12
4.	Chapter 2 - Repentance	14
5.	Chapter 3 - Guarding the Heart	16
6.	Chapter 4 - Guarding the Senses	19
7.	Chapter 5 - Purity and Satiety	21
8.	Chapter 6 - Focusing on Allah and Worshipping Him	22
9.	Chapter 7 - Rectitude and Presence	24
10.	Chapter 8 - Jumaah and Jamaah	26
11.	Chapter 9 - Persevere in Remembrance & Reflections	28
12.	Chapter 10 - Restrain from Laziness and Disobedience	30
13.	Chapter 11 - Path to Allah, Status of Self and Patients	32
14.	Chapter 12 - Examples of Patience	35
15.	Chapter 13 - Provisions are being Apportioned	38
16.	Chapter 14 - Trials and Tribulations	40
17.	Chapter 15 - No Need to Seek Approval from Mankind	42
18.	Chapter 16 - Revelation and Karamah	43
19.	Chapter 17 - Good Thoughts towards Allah	45
20.	Chapter 18 - Seeking Provisions and Striving for it	47
21.	Chapter 19 - Keep in Good Company	48
22.	Chapter 20 - Relationship with a Shaykh	50
23.	Chapter 20 - Conclusion	53
24.	Chapter 21 - Author's Epilogue	54

A Short Biography of Imam al-Haddad

In the Name of Allah Most Merciful Most Gracious

He is Imam Habib Abdullah bin Alwi Bin Muhammad Alhaddad, the famous Imam, the shaykh of Islam, the foremost of the people unification, the noble descendant of the Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, a descendant of the Imam Al-Hussein, may Allah be pleased with him, the shaykh Abdullah ibn Alawi Alhaddad Al Alawi, may Allah reward him for us with the best rewards He gives those of His people who guide us to Him.

He was born in Sapir, a small suburb in Tarim, Hadhramaut, South Yemen, on the night 5 Safar 1044 after Hijrah. Tarim was already a center of the learned Asyraf of the descendant of Saiyidina Hussein bin Ali bin Abu Talib. He grew up in an enlightened environment. He was raised and educated there, originally taught by his father, and was never seen to show the recklessness of other children. He lost his eyesight while still young. He was granted the power of discernment as compensation. He gathered as he grew the best of knowledge and spirituality, and became outstanding in knowledge, guidance, calling people to Allah, and being a shaykh in the most perfect sense of the word. He was given the title 'Pole of Guidance' [Qutbul Irshad] by the greatest of the people of knowledge in his time and thereafter until today.

Some have said that there were three ranks in calling to Allah, according to whether it was done by pen, tongue or foot (travelling). All three were combined to perfection in Imam al-Haddad, may Allah shower His mercy upon him. His books are still in print in Egypt, India, Hijaz, Istanbul, and Java. His fame spread throughout the Muslim world and his writings which were clearly based on the Qur'an and the practices of the Prophet [Sunna] were never criticised nor thought to be controversial.

His roots from Prophet Muhammad, messenger of Allah, blessings and peace upon him, from Fatima Zahraa, daughter of Muhammad and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Gate to (The radiant) the City of knowledge, may

Allah be pleased with him and all his descendants.

Then on from Imam Al-Hussein > Imam Ali Zainal Abidin > Imam Muhammad Albaqir > Imam Jaafar Alsaddiq > Imam Ali Aluraidi > Muhammad AnNaqib > Isa AnNaqib > Ahmad Almuhajir illa Allah > Ubaidillah > Alawi > Muhammad > Alawi > Ali Khali 'Qassam > Muhammad of Mirtbat > Alawi > AbdurRahman > Ahmad Alfaqih > Abdullah > Muhammad > Ahmad > Abu Bakr AtTawil > Ahmad Alhaddad > Alawi > Muhammad > Abdullah > Ahmad > Muhammad > Alawi > Abdullah Qutbul Irshad

He earnestly sought knowledge, accompanying scholars such as:

1. al-Habib Umar bin Abdul Rahman Alatas.
2. al-Habib Oukail bin Abdurrahman Alsaqaff
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Syaikh Aideed
4. al-Habib Sahl Bin Ahmed Bahasan Alhadeely Baalwi
5. al-Said Muhammad Bin Alwi Alsaqaff

Amongst his students are:

1. His son, our leader Al-Habib Hassan bin Abdullah Alhaddad.
2. al-Habib Ahmad bin Zain Alhabshie
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Abdullah Bilfaqeh
4. al-Habib Muhammad bin Zain bin Semait
5. al-Habib Umar bin Zain bin Semait
6. al-Habib Umar bin Abdurrahman Albar
7. al-Habib Ali bin Abdullah bin Abdurrahman Alsaqaff
8. al-Habib Muhammad bin Umar bin Taha alSafi Alsaqaff and many others

It seems as he was selected to carry out the mission of dakwah for Islam and spiritual guidance using wit and wisdom. People eventually entirely attended to him and his name became popular. People from different walks of life benefitted from his books, preached and guidance. His mission received peoples' approval and love. His publications have been translated into English, Malay, French and other languages. He passed away on the evening of Tuesday, 7 Dzulkaedah 1132 Hijrah and was buried in a simple grave at the graveyard of Zanbal in Tarim. May Allah show mercy on him and reward him abundantly.

His publications are distinctively popular among the old and young then and till now.

They include the following:

1. **التَّصَايُحُ الدِّينِيَّةُ وَالْوَصَايَا الْإِيمَانِيَّةُ.**
An Nasaih id-Diniyya wal Wasaya al-Imaniyyah
Sincere Religious Advices and Recommendations of the Imam
2. **الدَّعْوَةُ النَّامَةُ وَالتَّذَكُّرَةُ الْعَامَّةُ**
Ad-Da'wa tut-Taammah wat-Tadhkira tul 'Aammah
"An All Out Call to Islam and a General Admonition"
3. **رِسَالَةُ الْمَعَاوَنَةِ وَالْمُظَاهِرَةِ وَالْمُؤَاوِزَةِ لِلرَّغَائِبِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي سُلُوكِ طَرِيقِ الْآخِرَةِ**
Risala tul Mu'awanah wal Mudhahirah wal Mu'azirah Lir-Raagibeen Minal Mu'mineen Fee Suluki Tariq-al-Akhirah
The Book of Assistance, Support and Encouragement for Such Believers as Desire To Follow The Way of the Afterlife
4. **الْفُصُولُ الْعِلْمِيَّةُ وَالْأُصُولُ الْحِكْمِيَّةُ**
Al-Fusul ul-'Ilmiyyah wal Usul ul-Hikmiyyah
"Knowledge and The Principles of Wisdom"
5. **سَبِيلُ الْإِذْكَارِ وَالِاعْتِبَارِ بِمَا يَمُرُّ بِالْإِنْسَانِ وَيَنْقُضِي لَهُ مِنَ الْأَعْمَارِ**
Sabilal-Idhkaar wal-I'tibaar Bima Yamurru bil-Insan WaYanqadhee Lahu Minal A'maar
"The Way To Remember And Learn From The Lives of Man That Wane and Perish"
6. **رِسَالَةُ الْمَذَاكِرَةِ مَعَ الْإِخْوَانِ الْمُحِبِّينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْخَيْرِ وَالْدِّينِ.**
Risalatul-Mudhaakarrah Ma'al-Ikhwaanil-Muhibbeen Min Ahlil Khayr Waddeen
"A Discussion Among Brothers and the Loved Ones From Among the Righteous in Good Deeds and Faith".
7. **رِسَالَةُ آدَابِ سُلُوكِ الْمُتَرِيدِ**
Risalatul Aadaabi Suluk il-Murid
The Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker [Murid]

8. *Kitab bul-hakim* . ٨
Book of Wisdom.
9. *An-Nafaa'is-il Alawiyyah fil Masaail-il-Sufiyyah* . ٩
The Gems of the Alawiyya Concerning Sufism.
10. *It'haaf is-Saail bi-Ajwibatil Masaail* . ١٠
The Gifts For the Seeker Being Some Answered Questions.
11. *Waseelatul 'Ibaad Ilaa Zaadil Ma'aad* . ١١
A Means For People To Provide For The Hereafter. (A Compilation of the Imam Azkaar and Awraad, including *Wird Latif*, *Wird Kabir*, *Ratib al-Shahir*, *Hizbul-Fat'h* and *Hizbun-Nasr* by Habib Muhammad bin Alawi Alhaddad).
12. *Ad-Durrul Mandhum Li Dhawil 'Uqul Wal Fuhum* . ١٢
Poetic Pearls For Discerning and Understanding Minds.
This is his *Diwan*, the best of his *Qaseedas*.
13. *Thalbit tulfu'ad bizikir kalam majilis* . ١٣
Affirming of the Hearts - with Remembrance of the Speeches at Majlis Vol. I and Vol. II

Most of Imam al-Haddad's manuscripts were recompiled by Habib Ali bin Isa bin Abdulkader Alhaddad, who was born in Singapore and educated in Tarim. They were subsequently re-edited, reprinted, translated and distributed by various inspired parties.

Scholars, as well as the laymen, so highly admired the works that they would read them repeatedly. These scholarly works have also been described as summary of the quintessence of Scholar Ghazali's literature and eventually indispensable as being brief, but comprehensive.

Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Infinitely Merciful, the Compassionate.

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

There is neither might nor power except with the permission of Allah, the Most High and Magnificent.

All praises and thanks belong to Allah, who when He so wishes, casts into the hearts of the seekers the anguish of longing, thereby driving them to travel the path towards happiness. That is, faith [*Iman*] and devotion, and the annihilation of all formalities, customs and habits. May Allah send his blessings and peace upon our master Muhammad, the leader of the members of sovereign authority, and upon his family and companions, who are also the masters and the leaders.

Thereafter,

Allah, the Exalted, and He is the Truthful of Speaker, says

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا. وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا

If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them such things as We will, to such persons as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for the (things of) Hereafter, and strive therefore with all due striving, and have Faith, they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah).¹

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 18-19

The 'transitory life' is life on this earth. For the seeker who desires it, let alone actively pursues it, ends up in the Fire, rebuked and humbled. Should not a man of reason beware and turn away from it, while diligently safeguards himself from it.

The Hereafter here means the Heaven. It is not enough merely to desire it only, instead one should exercise good faith and do righteous deeds as necessary to achieve it as indicated by His, the Exalted, words: "and strive therefore with all due striving, and have Faith."

"The ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah)" are those deeds which were accepted by Allah, they thereby deserve praise and great rewards which have no limits and no ending, by the grace of Allah and His mercy.

The loser, in all respect, is the seeker of the transitory life who will surely receive the rightful threat (from Allah) as described in the Qur'anic verse above. His desire for the earthly life is so powerful that it makes him neglect, deny the Hereafter until he does not believe in it, or he believes but do not strive for it, firstly, he is an infidel and will stay in Hell forever, then secondly, will have strayed and is another loser.

The Messenger of Allah, upon him be blessings and peace, said,

إِنَّا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهَاجَرَتْهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَتَزَوَّجُهَا فَهَاجَرَتْهُ إِلَى مَا هَا جَرَ إِلَيْهِ.

Verily, every deed depends on its intentions, each man receives according to what he intended. He who forsakes what he has and migrates [*hijrah*] because of Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed travelled for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. He who migrates for worldly affairs he desires or to a woman he wishes to marry, he has indeed travelled to that which he intended.

He upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace be on him, thus informed us that the deed is only valid as the intention behind it. Indeed, deeds are valid according to their intentions, when these are good they

shall receive nothing but good, when these are evil they receive nothing but evil. He whose intention is good, his deed is inevitably good, and he whose intention is malicious, his deed is inevitably malicious, even if outwardly it looks good, as for example, a man who behaves in a righteous way only to appear righteous in the eyes of the people.

He, upon whom Allah's blessings and peace, also informed us that he who acts for the sake of Allah and with the intention of following in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be on him, his reward is with Allah. Allah will be pleased with him and make his last abode His garden, near to Him, and in the company of the best of His people. Those whose intentions go to other than Allah and whose action is devoted towards other than Allah accordingly, their rewards are with whoever their intentions had gone to. Those they performed for, those who can neither benefit nor harm them or anybody else. Who can neither give life, death nor resurrection. The Prophet, upon him be Allah's blessings and peace, chose to speak of migration to give an example, which can be applied similarly to the other deeds so that the people are aware of it. Those similar rules may generalise to all the laws of Islam.

Then I advise that, O dear student seeker who wish to present himself before the Lord; you should know, indeed, that when you ask me for advice in relation to the path that you are seeking, I feel at this point there is nothing ready for presentation. However, I do feel that I should forward a few points [*fasal*], short and simple, on the manners and the way in which a student seeker threads the path to Allah, the Exalted, with some brief uncomplicated statements.

By Allah, I asked that these may benefit me and you, those who asked, those who wish for it upon themselves, what were conveyed to me here. For me Allah is sufficient and He is the best disposer of affairs.

Imam Abdullah Alhadad
Tarim Hadhramaut

Chapter 1

The Beginning of the Path

A Powerful Urge of Divine Origin

A Seeker should Strengthen, Protect and Respond to it.

Know that the path begins when Allah throws into the heart of the slave a powerful urge, which troubles and unnerves him, and drives him towards Allah and the last abode. It turns him away from life on earth and from being, like others, busily engaged in gathering and building, tasting and enjoying the pleasures of the world, and deceived by its ornaments.

This urge is one of the hidden acts of Allah. It is a breath of guidance and the sign of the beginning of Allah's trust on his slave. Often the slave is bestowed these signs as he listens to those people who stir in him the fear of Allah, the desire and yearning for Him. At other times when he looks at the people of Allah, the Exalted and through them sees the signs, sometimes for no reason or without any means at all.

One is encouraged and should actively pursue such a state. However, to hope and dream only without exposing oneself to such environment or not standing at the door but just waiting is unwise and foolish.

Just as the Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said:

إِنَّ لِرَبِّكُمْ فِي أَيَّامِ دَهْرِكُمْ نَفَحَاتٍ أَلَا فَتَعَرَّضُوا لَهَا

"Indeed, your Lord sends down gifts on days of your time, so do expose yourself to them."

He, upon whom Allah, in His generosity, bestows such a noble urge, must know how precious it is. He should know that it is one of the greatest graces Allah, the Exalted, showers on him. It is such that he will never know its real value, nor will he ever be able to thank Allah enough for it. So let him thank Allah, the Exalted, to his utmost for having specially, singled him out and selected him from amongst his status and peers to receive it. How many a Muslim reaches the age of eighty years and more yet neither was he bestowed with such yearning nor his heart once was touched by this secret.

A seeker should diligently strengthen, protect, and respond to this urge. It grows stronger when he remembers and invokes Allah [*zikr*], when he reflects [*fikr*] on all which Allah has manifested, and when he keeps the company of the people of Allah, He protects it by keeping away from the company of those veiled from Allah, and by ignoring the whisperings of the devil [*shaytan*]. He responds to it when he hastens to return to Allah and sincerely seeks His Nearness; neither he waits, postpones, nor delays. Whenever the time arrived, he will accomplish the act and when the door is open for him to do good deeds and he should enter, when called to perform, he should hurry. Let him beware of letting one day pass after the other, for this is the work of the devil. He must approach it and not weakened as he progresses, he must not make excuses such as saying that there is no time or that he is not good enough for the task.

Abur Rabi', Allah has mercy on him, said, "Go to Allah with your limbs and broken limbs, do not wait for full health for that would only be idleness."

Ibn Ata'a said in his Hikam', "To say that the work has to be postponed until the time is found is nothing but the frivolousness of the self [*nafs*].

Chapter 2

Repentance

Repentance and its Conditions

Protecting Oneself from sins

A seeker on the path to Allah should begin by repenting completely towards Allah, the Exalted from all the sins. If he has treated unjustly any of the creations of Allah, or take what is rightfully theirs, or has debts to them, he should correct this by giving everyone their due. If the item does not exist any more, then he should replace it or ask them to release him from those debts. Verily, whoever encumbered by debts or the rights of another being cannot proceed towards the real path to the Truth (Allah).

For true repentance to be sound, he must feel sincerely remorseful for his sins, be truly and wholly determined not to repeat such actions as long as he lives. A person who repents from a certain sin, then he does not refrain from them, or is still harboring the intention to repeat them, his repentance is false and invalid.

A seeker to the path of Allah should continuously be extremely aware of his shortcomings, toward his duties and obligations to his Lord. Whenever he feels regret, sad and heart-broken at these shortcomings then let him know that Allah is with him.

For He, the Exalted says¹

أَنَا عِنْدَ الْمُتَكَسِّرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ أَجْلِي.

“I am with those whose hearts break for my sake”

Protect Oneself from Sins

A seeker should protect himself from the smallest of sins, let alone the great ones, more than he would protect himself from taking a drink of deadly poison. Should he be more frightened to commit such a sin than if he attempt to take a drink of poison because committing such sins will affect the heart just as the poison is to the body, only more powerful. The heart of a seeker is more precious to him than his body, nay it is investment capital of the seeker, and he should thus accord its rightful protection. On the other hand, the body is a target for diseases and will soon be destroyed by death. Its death however, means only that one has to leave this grief and anxiety-laden world.

However, if the heart is ruined, then the Hereafter is ruined too. For indeed, no one will escape and be rescued from the wrath of Allah, the All-Mighty, obtain His rewards and win His pleasure, except the one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.²

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

¹ A Hadith *Qudsi*

² Surah 26 Ash-Shu'araa Verse 89

Chapter 3

Guarding the Heart

Against Whisperings, Envy and Ill Thoughts

A seeker should strive diligently to guard his heart against whisperings (of evil suggestions), diseases (of the heart such as envy) and bad or evil thoughts. He should erect veil over the doors to his heart to be constantly vigilant and prevent these things from entering it. Indeed, once these elements enter his heart they will ruin it, and it will become difficult to expel them from it.

The heart is the place upon which his Lord's gaze falls. Thus, it is essential that the seeker should purify his heart from worldly desires, spitefulness, rancour or bitter feelings, swindle or deceit towards any Muslim, or from having ill thoughts towards any of them. Instead one must be of good advice to them, compassionate with them, and merciful towards them, have faith and believe in the good in them, desiring good for them as he desires for himself, and disliking for them what he dislikes for himself from all evils.

You should know, o dear seeker, that the heart commits sins, which are uglier, fouler, and more offensive than actions committed by the limbs, physical organs and the senses. A heart (that has all these sins) remains unfit for the gnosis of Allah, and for His love to descend into it, until it rids itself and free of all such sins.

Among the worst sins of the heart are conceit, hypocrisy, and envy. Arrogance and conceit are a proof of excessive foolishness; they are the limits of ignorance and stupidity. Conceit is not becoming of one

who knows that his existence was from a smelly drop of semen, and very soon, this person will become a decaying cadaver. If he possesses virtues and good qualities, they are but a graceful gift from Allah and His creation, he can achieve nothing by his own power, and neither can he acquire anything through his own will nor strength.

With what Allah had gracefully bestowed on him, and that Allah could take away everything from him due to his discourteous behaviour and adversely attributing to himself what belongs to Allah, he should refrain from being arrogant or giving himself prominence over the slaves of Allah. Prominence and Greatness are attributes of Allah, the Compeller, the Supreme.

As for the presence of hypocrisy and simulation, it is a proof that the seeker's heart is devoid of attestation of the Majesty of Allah and His Vastness, because his action is only to seek the approval of creatures by feigning, and is not contented with just Allah, Lord of the Universe who knows what he does. The person, who performs good deeds and likes other people to know it too so that people would revere and bring forth them to serve him, is an ignorant hypocrite who desires life on earth. Whilst a pious ascetic is one who finds it repugnant even when people offer him reverence and wealth, thus seeking to avoid them. Who can be more ignorant than one who seeks this life over or using the deeds for the Hereafter? If he is unable to renounce the earthly life, then he should seek this life from its Owner, that is, Allah. Indeed, the hearts of creations are in His hand. He draws toward the one who seeks and serves Him, as He wishes..

As for envy, it is a manifest enmity and opposition to Allah, the Glorious, in testament to His Kingdom because, when, Exalted is He, bestows favors and gifts on some of His slaves, there is no doubt that He evidently intended them to be given in a particular manner, for none forces His hand, for He is the Exalted. Then if a slave wants something different from what his Lord wants, he is discourteous, and deserves to meet with disaster.

At time, envy is direct to things of worldly life such as social eminence or wealth. These are too petty and lowly to be envied. On the contrary, one should show compassion to those who are afflicted by them, and thank Allah who shielded you from them.

Envy can also be directly related to things of Hereafter such as searching for knowledge and acting virtuously. It is ugly of a seeker to be jealous or to resent a companion on the same path who has given him help, on the contrary, he should rejoice for the help he gets from his companion, and derive strength from the fact that they are alike. A believer finds strength in his brother. Thus this is an encumbrance upon a seeker to develop inwardly love and strives outwardly to bring all the people on the path to Allah. Thus, together they keep busy in submitting to and obeying Him, and he should not care whether they become better than him or he better than they do. For indeed, this is endowed by Allah and Transcendent and Exalted is He, selects whoever He wishes to give His mercy.

There are many blameworthy qualities embedded in the heart. We have not mentioned them all for the sake of brevity. However, we have explained and cautioned against all the major sources that produce them and the origin of them all is love of life on this earth. Just like, it was reported that the Messenger of Allah, blessings peace be on him, said; "The love of this life is the head of all sins."

If the heart is free from it, then it becomes whole, clear, enlightened and fragrant, fit to receive the lights and the secrets (from Allah, the Exalted) unveiled.

Chapter 4

On Guarding the Senses

Against Rebellious Acts

And being deceived by Life on Earth

A seeker should strive to restrain his senses and limbs from rebellion, sins, and only use them in obedience. He should use them only in those things that would benefit him in the Afterlife.

Pitfall of the Tongue

He should take great care in guarding his tongue, for its size is small but its crimes are great. Let him prevent it from lying, backbiting, and other forms of forbidden speech. Let him avoid lewdness, and of delving into what does not concern him, even if not forbidden, for this makes the heart grow harder and is a waste of time. A seeker should only move his tongue in reading Qur'an, remembrance, giving advice to Muslims, enjoining good and forbidding that which is reprehensible, and in those things of life on earth, which relate to his Afterlife. The Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كُلُّ كَلَامِ ابْنِ آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ لَا لَهُ إِلَّا ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَمْرٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ نَهْيٌ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ.

"Everything that the son of Adam says is counted against him, except remembrance of Allah, enjoining to do good and forbidding evil."

Pitfall of the Ears and Eyes

Know that hearing and sight are two open doors, from which whatever enters through them reaches the heart. How many a thing does a man hear or see, which he should not have, and which entered the heart and has proven difficult to remove? For the heart is rapidly affected by what enters it, and when it becomes so, the effect is difficult to erase.

Let the seeker then be careful to protect his hearing and sight, and strive to restrain all his senses and limbs from sins, and from what is in excess of the necessary. Let him beware of looking with approval at the life on earth and its ornaments, for outwardly, it is a manifestation of deception and inwardly, a lesson in wisdom.

The eye looks at the earth's deceptive manifestations, but the heart should look at the lesson hidden within. How many a seeker looked at some of the ornaments or vanities of the life on earth, and then his heart leaned toward them, liked to strive to gather (the seemingly precious objects) and build (magnificent buildings), and became therefore lost on the wrong path? So, it is enjoined on the seeker to lower his sight from all that is created but to only look with the intention of seeing the example or take lesson within it. Remember as you look at it that it will wither and go just as from where it came for its existence was beheld by many men who are now gone while it remains. Generations after generations have received it as an inheritance, which will inevitably perish and disappear.

Thus when you look at something that exists with an eye that sees in them the Creator's perfect power, its evidence and beholder are testifying to the Creator's Transcendent. For verily, all the existence on earth call out testifying to Allah according to each of their state and those whose heart is enlightened by the light of Allah can hear them. For indeed, there is no God except Allah, the Powerful and Wise.

Chapter 5

Purity and Satiety

Remain in a State of Ritual Purity

Preferring Hunger to Satiety

It is proper that the seeker should maintain a state of ritual purity. So whenever he became ritually impured, he should perform ablution then prays two prostrations. If he is married and go to his wife for coitus, then he should take a bath immediately and not remain in a state of impurity. To help him maintain his ritual purity he should eat a little, verily, the one who eats much breaks his ritual purity often and finds it an effort to maintain ritual purity. Eating little is also of help in keeping awake at night, which is one of the most important functions of a seeker.

It is incumbent that he should not eat unless it is absolutely necessary, and sleeps only when it overcomes him. He should speak only when necessary, and not mingle to be close with people except that it brings him (spiritual) benefit. The one who eats much, his heart grows hard, and his limbs become too heavy for acts of worship. Eating a lot causes one to sleep and talk a lot, and when a seeker sleeps and talks a lot, his quest becomes an empty shell devoid of substance. In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be on him said,

مَا مَلَأَ ابْنُ آدَمَ وَعَاءَ شَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنِهِ، حَسْبُ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَقِيمَاتٍ يُقِمْنَ صُلْبَهُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالََةَ فَتُلْتُ لَطْعَامِهِ وَتُلْتُ لِشَرَابِهِ وَ تُلْتُ لِنَفْسِهِ

"Never does the son of Adam fill a worse vessel than his stomach; it is enough for him to have a few bites to keep his back straight; if he has to, then let him give one third of it to his food, one third to his drink, and one third to his breath."

Chapter 6

Focusing on Allah Worshipping Him

Directing one's whole attention towards Allah Devoting oneself to His worship

It is inevitable that a seeker should keep himself away from those people who commit rebellious and forbidden acts, and be most conscientious in carrying out his obligations and those practices which are encouraged, and he should be the most eager to do what draws him near (to Allah), and the quickest to respond to acts of goodness. A seeker is different from other people only in the manner he turns wholly towards Allah, being obedient, and freeing his self from anything which distracts him from worshipping Him.

Let him spend his breaths carefully, hold on to his time avariciously, do not let it pass wastefully, be it a little or long time except to spend it in what takes him closer to Allah and benefit him on the day he meets Him.

It is incumbent upon him to have daily recitals or a routine of every kind of worship, so that he will have a number of those to hold on to tenaciously and not neglect any of them, whether in difficult or easy times.

He should read the Great Quran frequently, and to reflect on its meanings, and recite it harmoniously. Also, while reciting, he should reflect on the Greatness of the Speaker in the recitation of His words, and not like those who recite negligently or those who recite the Quran

eloquently with beautiful melodious voices while whose hearts are devoid of the Exaltation nor Reverence for Allah. They read it in the form it was sent down, from its opening to its end, and know nothing of its meanings nor of the reasons and occasions for sending each part of it down. Had they known, they would have acted.

Indeed, knowledge is only useful when it is acted upon. A knowledgeable person who does not act on his knowledge is no different from the ignorant, except that the former will have a stronger case made against him before Allah. Seen in this way, the ignorant one would be in a better situation than the learned. This is why it was said, "Ignorance is better than knowledge which does not benefit."

Stay Vigil in Divine Worship at Night

It is incumbent upon you, O seeker, to make haste to manage the night vigil divine worship. Indeed, the night is the time when the slave is in seclusion with his Lord. So as to make abundant pleas for help and seek forgiveness, commune with your Lord with the tongue of the humble lowliness and needy, with a heart where absolute helplessness and abasement are realised. Beware of neglecting the night vigil worship, dawn must never find you but awake remembering and invoking Allah, the Extolled, the Exalted.

Chapter 7

Rectitude and Presence

Rectitude in the performance of prayers

Presence with Allah is the essence of all acts of worship

O dear seeker! You must strive for wholeness in performing the five prayers. Make your standing, recitation, piety, humility, bowing, and prostrations of the prayers complete and full, also all the other obligations and supererogatory of the prayers. Before entering into prayer, bring to your heart the vastness of the One you wish to stand before, the Majestic, the Exalted. Be diligent and attentive in communing with the King of kings, the Subdue of tyrants, if not the distracted heart which is lost in the valleys of unawareness and whisperings, floating in incidental thoughts and worldly ideas, thus will cause you to deserve to be hateful to Allah and expelled from Allah's doorstep.

Just as the one upon whom be the blessings of Allah and peace be on him, said,

إِذَا قَامَ الْعَبْدُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ أَقْبَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِوَجْهِهِ فَإِذَا انْتَفَتَ إِلَى وَرَائِهِ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ابْنُ آدَمَ انْتَفَتَ إِلَيَّ مَنْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لِي مِنِّي، فَإِنْ انْتَفَتَ الثَّانِيَةَ قَالَ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ انْتَفَتَ الثَّالِثَةَ أَعْرَضَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

“When a slave stands for prayer Allah turns His face toward him and watch him, if the slave then looks behind him, then Allah, the Exalted, says, “O son of Adam, to whom has you turned towards that is better than I!” Should the slave turn away again, Allah would say the same, when he looks away for the third time, Allah turns away from and leaves him.”

If this was the state of one who looks away physically, causing Allah to turn away and leave him, what would it be like for the one, when praying, yet whose heart is, directed to the fortunes and ornaments of this world? Allah, the Pure and Exalted is He, does not look at forms and appearances but at the hearts and its secrets.

Essence of Worship

Then you should know that the essence and meaning of all worship is to be present with Allah whilst in the act. Acts of worship, which are devoid of attention and presence, are like dust, easily scattered and blown away.

An example of the one who is not attentive and present with Allah in his worship is like the one who offers as gifts to a great king a dead girl for a maid or an empty coffer, thus he should earn punishment instead of reward for his gift.

Chapter 8

The Friday Prayer And Congregational Prayers

Pray in Congregation

A caution against missing the Friday Prayer

An Exhortation to perform the regular additional prayers

O seeker, be very wary and mindful of leaving Friday prayers and not praying the other compulsory [*Fardu*] prayers in congregation, for indeed, such is the behavior of the people of falsehood and the features of the elite of the ignorance. Take care to perform the regular additional [*warid*] or supererogatory [*sunna*] prayers before and after the obligatory ones, persevere with the prayers of odd [*witr*] and mid-morning [*dhuha*] and enliven with remembrance [*zikr*] the interval between the sunset [*maghrib*] and Night [*isha'*] prayers.

Be extremely careful to always keep alive the periods between the dawn [*fajr*] prayer and sunrise [*israk*], and the period between the afternoon [*asr*] and sunset [*maghrib*] prayers, for these are precious noble periods where those slaves who turn to Allah receive the flow of His assistance.

The time following the dawn prayer if kept alive has a powerful and significant effect in attracting provisions for the body, whereas, the time following the afternoon prayer, if kept alive, has a powerful effect in attracting provisions for the heart. That was what the great gnostics who knew have experienced with clear vision and closeness to Allah.

Thus there is a hadith, which said,

إِنَّ الَّذِي يَقْعُدُ فِي مُصَلَّاهُ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ بَعْدَ صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ أَسْرَعُ فِي تَحْصِيلِ
الرِّزْقِ مِنَ الَّذِي يَضْرِبُ فِي الْآفَاقِ.

“The one who sits in his place of prayer to invoke Allah after the dawn prayer will receive the provisions earlier than the one who travels the horizons.”

This refers to those who travel in search for provisions (income or business).

Chapter 9

Remembrance and Reflection

On exhorting to persevere in Remembrance [*zikr*] and Reflection [*fikr*]

What really determine (utmost important) for the one travelling to the path of Allah the Exalted, after having obeyed commands and avoided forbidden things, is to persevere in remembering Allah, so, O dear seeker, do keep at it at all times and places, with the heart and the tongue.

The invocations which contains the complete meanings of all invocations collectively and their fruits, whether hidden or manifest, is,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

“There is no God but Allah”

This is the remembrance instituted for those who begin the path to Allah, enjoined to keep to and return with it for those ending the journey.

He whose delight is in tasting some of the secrets of the path and who wants some of its realities to become revealed to him, let him be intent on invoking Allah, the Exalted; with a heart that is present; courtesy that is abundant; attention that is sincere; and concentration that is piercing.

Whenever these combinations exist within a person when he invokes, then the highest possible authority of realm of Allah is revealed, his spirit will experience the realities of the ‘world of utmost purity’, and the eye of his secret witnesses the Highest and Holiest Beauty.

Discipline the Self to Reflection [*fikr*]

O dear seeker you should embrace reflection [*fikr*] in abundance, it is of three kinds;

First, the reflection on the wonders of the ‘Power’, and the marvels of the heavenly and earthly kingdoms, its fruit is gnosis by Allah.

Secondly, the reflection on the gifts of Allah and His graces and favors, its result is the love of Allah.

Thirdly, the reflection upon the life on this earth, the afterlife and the states of creation in both, thus its benefit is turning away from life on earth, becoming closer and attentive to Hereafter.

We have discussed in detail all three categories of reflection and their results and benefits in a book called “*Risalatul mu’awanah*” or “The Book of Assistance”¹.

Please refer to it for more details.

رسالة المُعَاوَنَةِ وَالْمُظَاهِرَةِ وَالْمُؤَاوِزَةِ لِلرَّاعِبِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي سُلُوكِ طَرِيقِ الْآخِرَةِ

Risalatul Mu'awanah wal Mudhahirah wal Mu'awirah LirRaagibeen Minal Mu'mineen Fi Suluki Tariqal Akhirah

The Book of Assistance, Support and Encouragement for Such Believers as Desire To Follow The Way of the Afterlife, translated into English simply as “The Book of Assistance” by Mostafa Al Badawi.

It is also translated in Malay as “Petunjuk Thariqat ke Jalan Akhirat” by Syed Ahmad binSemait

Chapter 10

Restrain from Laziness and Disobedience

How to rebuke the self From Being Lazy in Obedience And Swayed towards Disobedience

O dear seeker, if you find that your self to be lazy towards obedience and heavy feet towards doing good deeds, then you should lead your self back by the reins of hope. That is, remind your self of what Allah has promised those who obey Him, with achievement of great rewards of vast bounty, obtain a permanent bliss, grace and the pleasure of Allah, such that they are permitted to live in eternity in the vastness of the Garden (heaven) amongst those in honour, high rank, and nobility near Him, the Exalted, and near all His slaves who achieved such high status.

If you feel that you are leaning towards rebellion or heading for sinful act, then use the whip of fear to rebuke it. That is to remind it of that with which Allah has threatened those who disobey Him, humiliation, disaster, debasement and vengeance, expulsion and deprivation, shrinkage and loss.

Beware that you do not fall into the category of those who strayed and belittled matters concerning the Eternal Garden and the Hell Fire, whereby one should revere the issues concerned that Allah and His Messenger have hold in esteem.

Thus you should act only for the sake of Allah for He is your Lord and you are His slave, ask Him to let you enter His Garden and seek protection from His Fire through His grace and mercy.

If the devil [*shaytan*], may Allah's curse be upon him, whispers to you that Allah, the Exalted and Extolled, has no need of you or your deeds, that neither your submission will benefit Him nor your rebellion harms Him, then reply to him that "he is correct!" However, it is I who is in need of the graces of Allah, and the good deeds, submission benefits me and disobedience harms me, this is what my Lord has said to me in his Noble Book and via the tongue of His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him.

If he [*shaytan*], may Allah's curse be upon him, then says to you, "Indeed if Allah has determined [*takdir*] that you are among the fortunate, then you will inevitably end up in the Garden, whether you are those who submit or rebel against him. If Allah has determined that you are among the unfortunate, you will end up in the Fire even if you are obedient!"

Do not be taken in by what he [*shaytan*] said, ignore him! That is so, because the decree of future events is hidden, it is not obvious to him, only Allah knows and none of His creation has anything to do with it.

Whilst submission and obedience are the surest argument of proof of future good fortune, nothing stands between the obedient and the Garden should he die in his state of obedience. Whereas disobedience is the surest proof of future ill fortune, nothing stands between a sinner and the Fire should he die in his state of sin.

Chapter 11

Path to Allah

On the states of the self and on being patient

O dear seeker, know that the beginning of the path (to Allah) is patience and its end is thankfulness. Its beginning is difficulty and its ending is bliss. Its beginning is toil and weariness and its ending is opening (of all doors), revelation (of all secrets), and arrival at the utmost of the hope and the ultimate desire, which is gnosis of Allah [*ma'rifatullah*], arrival at the presence of Him, being comforted by Him, and standing in the nobility of His presence with His angels before Him. The person who exercises gracious patience as the foundation of all his behaviour and deeds receives all the goodness, achieves everything that he hopes for, and triumphs over all that he seeks.

You should be aware (and be mindful) that at the beginning (of one's live) the self (individual soul) [*nafsu amara*]¹ commands, exhorts and is prone to evil and forbids good. When a man resists its commands by patiently endures what comes from contradicting its whims of lower desires, it changes to a 'blaming self' [*nafsu lawwamah*]² (eschew Evil) (or an admonisher of evil or the self-reproaching spirit). Thus changes the colour of its face (upgrade the status of the soul) to the status of tranquil and serene [*nafsu mutma'innah*]³ with another face, that of 'commanding (of good deeds)'.

¹ "The (human) soul is certainly prone to evil". Surah 12 Yusuf Verse 53

² "And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit; (eschew Evil)". Surah 75 Qiyamat Verse 2

³ (To the righteous will be said) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!" Surah 89 Fajr Verse 27

Thus it can be this (lustful and bad) on one occasion, and that (patience and good) on another. If he then gently guides it and leads it by the reins of desire for what Allah has in store, it becomes tranquil and at peace, it enjoins good and finds its pleasure and comfort in it. It forbids evil, repels and flees from it.

The one whose self [*nafs*] is at peace¹, tranquil and serene is greatly amazed by the way people turn away from obedience and what it carries of delight, comfort, and pleasure. Yet they rush into rebellion and lusts for lower desires, even though these are filled with depression, estrangement, loneliness and bitterness. He may think that the way they taste those two states (of the self) is the same as his, he then draws on his own experience for comparison and remembers how pleasurable he had once found it to satisfy his lusts, and how bitter to perform acts of obedience, he then understands, and realises that he had only reached his present state after a long struggle, and by the vast grace of Allah, the Exalted.

You must know and be aware that to have the patience to stay away from committing sins and the lower desires, and keep to acts of obedience, is what makes you achieve everything that is good, and the calumniator to every noble status and lofty state (in the eyes of Allah).

How can it not be when Allah, the Glorious Supreme says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ
"O ye who believe! persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear (be mindful of your duties and be obedient to) Allah; that you may prosper"².

The Exalted also says,

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ الْخُسْنَى عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا

"The fair promise of thy Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel, because they had patience and constancy."³

¹ The objective of the seeker is achieved when the Al-Mighty said to him, "O (you) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! You return to your Lord, well pleased (yourself), and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among My Devotees! "You, enter you My Heaven!" Surah 89 Fajr Verse 27 - 30

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 200

³ Surah 7 Al A'raf Verse 137

And He, the Exalted said,

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

“And We appointed, from among them, Leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our Signs.”¹

There is a hadith that mentioned, “Amongst the least of favors bestow upon you is certainty and determined patience. Thus those who has a share of these characters then he is not overly concerned by what he misses in nightly vigil worship and day fasting²”.

Chapter 12

Example of Patience

Test of Poverty on the People of Patience

At times, the seeker is put to test and endeavour hardship of poverty, neediness, and the narrowing of the channels of provision. Then in such a situation he should thank Allah and in fact consider it as a great blessing. As life on earth is an adversary that Allah presents it towards his enemies, and He deflects it away from His protégées (saints) [awliya]. So let him (the seeker) thank and be grateful to Allah, the Benevolent, for making him resemble and following the foot steps of His Prophets, saints [awliya], and pious devoted righteous servants¹².

Is it not the leader amongst the Messengers and the best of creations, Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, used to tie a stone to his stomach out of hunger. In some situation, two months and more would pass while no fire would be lit in his house, neither for cooking nor for any other purpose. He survived on dates and water. Once he had a guest and wanted to serve him something, so he sent (a helper) to his nine houses (to see if there are any food to be serve). But none was found for him to serve his guest! On the day he died, his armour was still pawned with a Jew for a measure of barley which was on that day was all that there was to eat in his house.

¹ Thus be grateful that you are being tested with the same adversities as those foremost in Allah's sight. But those who have Faith and work righteousness. They are Companions of the Garden: therein shall they abide (for ever). Surah 2 Baqara Verse 82

² Allah, the Exalted says in Surah An-Nisaa Verse 69. “All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the Company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, of the Prophets (who teach), the sincere (lovers of Truth), the witnesses (who testify), and the righteous (who do good): ah! what a beautiful Fellowship!”

¹ Surah 32 as Sajda Verse 24

² The exercise of observing the Night Vigil and fasting during the day develops certainty and patience.

So, dear seeker, let your earnest desire for worldly life be just a piece of cloth to cover what should be covered [*aurat*] of you, and just a bite of permissible [*halal*] food to allay your hunger only.

Beware of the deadly poison of longing for the luxuries and pleasures of worldly life. That is to be alluding to the pleasures of its lower desires and thus be envy of others who were conferred and enjoying the good life. Then remember that later they will be asked about the favours granted to them, and to account for what they took and had enjoyed its lower pleasures.

If only you knew the hardship they will have to endure, the bitterness they will have to swallow, the troubles and anxieties they will have to carry in their hearts and breasts, all of which come from pursuing the worldly life, and devotion to it, and guarding it¹ carefully, then you would see clearly that these far outweigh the pleasures enjoyed if indeed it can be said that those are really pleasures.

It is enough for you to repel from loving the worldly life and to lead a life of abstentions and asceticism [*zuhud*] knowing that (in a hadith *Qudsi*) Allah, the Glorious said,

وَلَوْ لَا أَنَّ يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لَبُيُوتِهِمْ
سُقْفًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ، وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُورًا عَلَيْهَا
يَتَكَبَّرُونَ، وَزُخْرُفًا وَإِنْ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ
رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“And were it not that (all) men might become of one (evil) way of life. We would provide, for everyone that blasphemes against (Allah) Most Gracious, silver roofs for their houses, and (silver) stair-ways on which to go up, and (silver) doors to their houses, and thrones (of silver) on which they could recline, and also adornments of gold. But all this were nothing but conveniences of the present life: the Hereafter, in the sight of thy Lord, is for the Righteous.”

¹ This refers to the wealth and favours that Allah bestowed upon them as trials.

The Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ، وَلَوْ كَانَتْ تَرْنُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ
مَا سَقَى كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةً مَاءً.

“The world is the prison of the believers and the garden of the disbelievers [*kafir*], had it been worth the wing of a mosquito to Allah, He would never have allowed a disbeliever a sip of its water.”

And to know that since He, the Glorious created it, He has never looked at it.

Chapter 13

Provisions

Provisions are being Apportioned

You should realise and know that provision is divided and allocated by predetermined decree. Some slaves¹ are allotted a large share and a bigger capacity for it, while some are allotted a small provision and confined to neediness, all in accordance to the wisdom of Allah, the Wise.

Should you O dear seeker be among those who are apportioned a small share of it, you should exercise patience, be content, and be pleased with what your Lord has allotted to you. If you are one of those who have received a vast share, then be satisfied and just take what you need as necessary, and spend the rest in ways of goodness and channel it to good cause.

No Need to Divest Wealth in Devotion to Allah

Know that it is not necessary for a man who wishes to enter the path to Allah to leave or spend all his wealth if he is rich, or resign from his profession if he is working or leave his business if he is in commerce. However, it is necessary for him to be God-fearing (and be mindful of his duties to Allah) in what he does, and to have moderation in pursuing his livelihood so as not to miss the obligatory [*fard*] or supererogatory [*nawafil*] acts of worship.

¹ Allah created mankind as 'slave' just to worship Him, the Supreme and He, the Exalted, says in Surah 51 Az-Zariyat Verse 56. "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve (worship) Me.

Neither should he fall into the forbidden [*haram*] nor the unnecessary which is of no concern to him (being nosy) and does not help in the way to the path of Allah.

Should the seeker know that his heart would not be firm nor his religion safe, except by shedding his wealth and all other means, then it becomes incumbent upon him to do such. If he has wives and children who would need expenses and clothes, then it becomes his obligatory duty to provide all these and strive for it. If after trying to do this, he is not able to provide for them due to any of the reasons recognised by law [*shari'a*] he would be blameless and safe from sin.

Avoid Long Term Ambition

O dear seeker, you should know that you will not be capable of constantly being in acts of obedience, of avoiding lusts of lower desires, and of turning away from the worldly life until you realise that your days in this world are few and your death is near, then having the ending of your life before your eyes, and be ready for death, and know that it may descend on you at any time and moment.

You should beware of long term ambition, because they do sway you towards the love of worldly life, and make it difficult for you to persevere in obedience, reduce the intent on worship or devote yourself to the path of the Afterlife. Thus from the realisation of the nearness of death and the little time at hand comes all the goodness. You should seek this realisation so may Allah, the Exalted, grant you and us success.

Chapter 14

Trials and Tribulations

Be Patient When Harmed

Be Wary When Tempted

Sometimes, the created (people) show hostility to the seekers of the path, they may hurt him, treat him harshly or talk about him disparagingly. Should you become afflicted by any such thing, you must remain patient, forsake retaliation, and maintain your heart pure of grudges and evil intentions against them. Beware of asking or invoking Allah, the All-Mighty, to send down His wrath on those who injure you, and if a bad thing happened to them, never say, "It is because of what they did to me!"

It would be even better, if you are able to exercise more than just being patient enduring these wrongdoings, is to forgive them and pray to Allah, the Most Forgiving, for them to be good, such would be the behaviour and traits of the righteous [*asSiddiqeen*]. When mankind shuns you, (in any of the above ways), consider this to be a blessing from your Lord, for if people come to you or look up to you, they may distract you and keep you busy from worship in His obedience.

Similarly, if you are being tested, when people look up to you and seek your audience, respecting, praising and repeatedly seeking your audience, then be aware of the effect this may be a severe trial on you. So be thankful and grateful to Allah who has hidden your faults and deficiencies from them.

If you are worried about being pretentious, that is, pretending or artificially trying to look better in their eyes by showing off in their presence or the interaction will distract you from being obedience to Allah, then you should disassociate from them. If necessary, shut your house door on them so they do not come again. Thus isolate yourself or else leave the place where you are known for one where you are unknown.

You should give preference to remaining unnoticed, flee fame and publicity. Thus indeed, these are trials and tribulations and a form of hardship.

One of our righteous predecessors [*salaf*] said, "By Allah! A servant who is truthful with Allah always loves to go unnoticed in his status."

Whilst another said, "I have never known a man who wished to be recognised but that his religion left him and he became exposed."

No Need to Look to Mankind for Approval

O dear seeker, you should strive to purify your heart from the fear of mankind, and from putting your hopes in them or greed for what they have. This would cause a person to remain silent when faced with falsehood, and in front of those who compromise the religion, and thus neglect exhorting to good and forbidding evil. This attitude would be contemptible or humiliating enough in the eyes of the Lord, because the seeker is strong by his Lord, he has no fear and no hope except in Him.

When one of your Muslim brothers offers you assistance or favour by way of good intention, you should take it if you need it. Then you should express gratefulness and thanks to Allah for He is the real giver, and thank the servant whom Allah has chosen to deliver it to you. If you do not need it, you should assess whether it would be better for your heart to take it or refuse it. If your heart judges that you should refuse it, then do so tactfully so as not to hurt the heart of the giver, for to respect the feelings of a Muslim has great status with Allah.

You should be aware of refusing for the sake of acquiring a reputation, or of accepting it to satiate your lust. However, if you accept it due to lust, it is better for you then to turn it down in order to acquire a reputation of being ascetic and of turning away from the worldly life. The truthful and sincere will not be confused by this. Because his Lord would give him a light in his heart by which he knows what is required of him.

Revelation [*Mukasysfah*] and Miracles [*Karamah*]

On rebuking those who pursuers of Revelation [*Mukasysfah*] and Miracles [*Karamah*]

One of the most harmful things to the seeker is his asking for revelations [*kashf*], his longing for it, like miracles [*karamah*] and for extraordinary happenings, event out of the ordinary. These will never appear before him as long as he lusts for their appearance, because normally they come mostly to those who have a dislike for such things and no wish for them.

At times, these things can occur to those who are deceived to make them even more entangled, and test or tribulation to the weak in belief amongst the believers. In this context, these things are to debase rather than honour, they would be considered miracle [*karamat*] from Allah only if they appear on those who are steadfast. [*istiqamah*].

O dear seeker, if indeed Allah should honour you, by presenting such great honourable events, then praise and thank Him, Glorious and Extolled is He.

You should not stop from worship [*ibadah*] nor dwell on them and become overconfident, keep them hidden and do not mention them to other people. If none appears to you, do not wish for them, nor grieve

for their absence (even though you work hard in your deeds and worship).

The True Sense of Miracles

Now you should know that the miracles [*karamah*] which contain every other miracles, whether it is in reality or appear only in its form but in actual fact is not a miracle, all that has its roots in steadfastness (in the path to Allah) [*istiqamah*]. It manifests itself when complying with (Allah's) commands and avoiding what is forbidden (by Him), both outwardly and inwardly. So it is encumbrance upon you to strive and achieve in fullness those qualities (of steadfastness) [*istiqamah*]. Then you will be served by those beings in the upper (heavens) and lower (earth) worlds, but in such a way as not to veil you from your Lord, nor distract you from what He wants for you.

Chapter 17

Think Well of Allah

Hold on Only to Allah

O dear seeker, you should always think well of your Lord. Indeed affirm that He, the Most Merciful, will help you to fulfill your needs, guard and protect you. He will not entrust your hope neither to mankind nor to yourself. Indeed, the Glorious Supreme is He who has informed us about His Self, that He is as good to His slave as His slave's opinion of Him is. Thus you should remove from your heart the fear of poverty and the expectation that one day you may need people.

You should be aware and beware of directing your whole attention to matters of provisions but instead trust in your Lord's promise and in His providing for you.

He, the Exalted, says,

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا

"There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah¹."

Remember that you are among those who walk the earth, so occupy yourself with what He has commanded you in lieu of the provision that He has already guaranteed for you.

¹ Surah 11 Hud Verse 6

Thus indeed, Your Lord never forgets you. He has informed you that your provision is with Him, and commanded you to seek it from Him by worshipping.

He, the Exalted says,

فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ

“Then seek your sustenance from Allah, serve Him, and be grateful to Him¹.”

Have you not seen how He, the Most Gracious, provides for those [*kafirun*] who reject Him and yet they worship other than Him? Would He, the Most Merciful, not provide for the faithful who worship no other than Him when He even provides for those who rebel and disobey His commands? Would He not provide for the obedient who remember and thank Him in abundance?

Chapter 18

Rules in Seeking Provisions

Seeking Provisions and Striving For It

O dear seeker, you should know that there is no blame attached to seeking provision by manifesting action within the limits of what is permitted by law [*shari'a*]. What is wrong and blameworthy lies in the lack of tranquility of the heart through its preoccupation, worrying, and the pursuit of illusions!

It is proof of the ruin of his heart when a man is preoccupied by what he may need in a future as yet non-existent, when he says, “When this runs out, where shall I be able to find more? If provisions do not come in this manner, how else can they come?”

Whether a man objectively works on specific reasons or simply enters upon a means for provision, reflects the two statuses whereby Allah puts before whomsoever of His slaves He wishes. The one put by Allah into a state of which he is without means, let him strengthen his certainty, expand his accepting heart, and be intent on worship. As for the one whom Allah keeps in a state where he retains means, let him fear (and mindful of his duties towards) Allah when using them, let him rely on Allah to the exclusion of all else, and beware not to be distracted by them in his obedience to his Lord.

At times, the thoughts of provision, and of compromising with mankind and amongst other thoughts, can occur to a seeker. He is not to blame and will not sin as long as he rejects them and strives to remove them from his heart.

¹ Surah 29 Ankabut Verse 17

Chapter 19

Keep Good Company Look for a Teacher

Good Manners and Companions

O dear seeker, you must take the greatest care in keeping the company of the best of people and attend the gatherings of the pious and the righteous [*abrar*]. Then search with utmost concern for a good guide (or teacher) [*shaykh*], a pious righteous man, a man of guidance and good advice, who has knowledge of laws [*shari'a*], has travelled the path to Allah [*tariqa*], a man who has tasted and know the truth [*haqiqah*], a man who has perfection of mind and vastness of breast, wisdom in management, knowledge of the ranks and status of mankind, and the ability to discriminate between what is in them due to their instincts, innate qualities, status and states.

When you find a teacher so described, attach yourself to and depend on him, give him command over all of your affairs, and take his advice and suggestions in everything that concerns you. Follow his example in everything he says or does, except in those things which are specific to his status as a *shaykh*, like a *shaykh* has to mix with the general public in their daily routine, speak to them gently and evenly, draw to the people whether they are near and far from Allah.

In all these, you need to inter-blend and assess him in all of these situations, so as to raise no objection to any of his conduct neither obviously (aloud) nor privately (secretly).

Should a disturbing thought about him enter your heart, then you should strive to cast it out of you. If you are not satisfied and not able to do so, then, speak about it to the *shaykh*, so that he can explain the true situation to you and you can get rid of the negative thought. Similarly, you should also inform him of everything that occurs to you, especially in all matters and concerns that are related to the path to Allah.

Chapter 20

Relationship with a *Shaykh*

Put Your Trust in Your *Shaykh*

You should be circumspect and cautious that you are not just obeying the *shaykh* publicly and obviously when you know that he can see your obedience to him. Whilst on the back of it, you disobey him in secret whenever he is not aware of your action, you can thus perish.

Do not approach or meet up with any other *shaykh*, who is apparently known to take people on to the path of Allah unless you have your *shaykh's* permission. If he permits you, then guard your heart and meet whoever you like. If he does not give you permission, then you should know that he has chosen what is best for your condition, so do not accuse him or think that he is being envious or jealous because of it. Allah forbids such behaviour to be present amongst the elect from His people and those trending similar paths and characters.

You should also refrain from asking the *shaykh* to show miracles [*karamat*] or that he reveals to you what you secretly think, for indeed, the knowledge of the hidden belongs exclusively to Allah. The extreme limit of a saint [*wali*] is that Allah reveals to him some of the hidden natures, some of the time.

Sometimes a seeker may wish to test the *shaykh* and appear before him to ask the *shaykh* to reveal to him his own thoughts and condition. However, the *shaykh* may refrain from telling him even though it was revealed to him. This is to guard his secret and hide his state, for what they are, from the public. For indeed, the saints [*wali*]

may Allah be pleased with them, are the most careful of mankind in guarding secrets and the furthest from showing off with miracles [*karamat*] and extraordinary events, even though they have permission and may be given the authority over them.

Most miracles [*karamat*] appearing before the saints [*awliya*] do not appear by choice or by their effort. Those who witness any of these are invariably asked not to talk about such extraordinary happenings that they have witnessed until such time that the saints leave the world. The saints [*awliya*] may sometimes openly bring about such extraordinary events when they are certain that there are greater benefits in doing so than in keeping them hidden.

The Perfect [*kamil*] Teacher [*Shaykh*]

You must, indeed, know that a perfect *shaykh* is one who benefits the seeker through his activities, dealings and sayings and that he observes and protects the seeker whether present or absent. If the seeker is physically far from his *shaykh* no matter where, then he must seek from him guidelines as to what he should do and what he should refrain from doing.

The most harmful thing that can happen to the seeker is to change in his *shaykh's* feelings toward him, if this happens, then even if the *shaykhs* of the east and the west unite to improve him they will never succeed until his own *shaykh* becomes pleased with him again.

You should know that it is imperative for the seeker who is in search of a *shaykh* should not blindly surrender himself completely to anyone said to be a *shaykh* that can guide on the path to Allah until he knows that the *shaykh* is worthy of this description, and until he can accept the *shaykh* with his whole heart.

Similarly, it is imperative for a *shaykh* when a seeker comes to him asking to be led to the path to Allah, he should not be permitted to enter it until his sincerity has been tested, and the extent to which he thirsts for someone to guide him to his Lord.

All these pre-conditions relate to the *shaykh* who one would give a complete control of all decision that is *shaykh tahkim*. It is

imperative that the seeker remains with him like the body of a dead man in the hands of the one washing it for burial, or like a baby in the mother's care.

This does not apply to the *shaykh* who one is seeking blessings from, that is, *shaykh tabarruk*. This is whenever the seeker intends to get blessings and not put his affairs under the command of the *shaykh*. Then the more *shaykhs* he meets and the more he visits them seeking their blessings, the better.

If a seeker is not successful in finding a *shaykh*, then he should persevere in resolutely striving, he should turn to Allah to take refuge with absolute sincerity, and express his need to Him to foreordain for him one who will guide him. Surely he will be answered by the One who answers those in desperate need, and Allah will send him a slave of His to take the seeker by his hand.

Some seekers consider themselves without a *shaykh* and continue searching for a *shaykh*, while in actual fact Allah has ordained a *shaykh* for him that he has never seen, who teaching him by directing his 'unseen' attention and concern toward the seeker, yet the seeker remains unaware.

In reality, the vital factor is the truthfulness and sincerity of the seeker because the true *haqiqa shaykhs* exist aplenty. However, Glorious is He, who has made the evidence that point to His saints [*awliya*] through the evidence that points at Him, and has not made anyone reach them except those He, the Exalted, wishes them to reach Him, the All-Mighty.

Conclusion

O seeker, if you want something from your *shaykh*, or if you have a question to ask, do not refrain out of awe of his status and fear of disrespecting his position for questioning him or asking something from him, so you ask him once, if not satisfied then twice and three times. Do not think that it is courteous to refrain from raising questions and asking for things, unless, of course, the *shaykh* himself indicates that you should remain silent and leave this question, in which case you must obey him.

If the *shaykh* prevents you from doing something, or if he shows preference to someone else over you, then beware of accusing him. You must believe and convince that he would not do so other than what is beneficial to you and best for you. If you have committed a sin which you find is the cause of your *shaykh's* anger towards you, then you must be quick to apologise to him after you have repented to Allah until the *shaykh* becomes pleased with you again.

If you suspect a change in the *shaykh's* feelings toward you, just like for instance you find that his pleasantness to you is missing like as much as he usually does or similarly, then you must tell him what you feel of your fear that his heart has changed toward you. It may be due to something you did, in which case you can show repentance or it may be that you only imagined the *shaykh* to have changed, that this was a thought thrown into your heart by *shaytan* so that there is a disagreement with your *shaykh* and distress you. In which case when you find out that the *shaykh* is pleased with you then your heart will have peace. This cannot happen if, rather than talking about it, you keep quiet in the knowledge that you have done nothing wrong.

If you see a seeker who is full of respect and awe for his *shaykh* who believes in him, obeys him, outwardly and inwardly, and gives him the courtesy that is his due, then surely such a seeker will inevitably inherit his secret or something from him or part of it.

Author's Epilogue

Attributes of the Sincere Seeker

How he should behave

Some Gnostics [*Arif-Billah*], may Allah be pleased with them and make us benefit from them, have said,

- "A seeker is not a seeker until he is able to find in the Qur'an everything that he wants, he knows the difference between his shortfall from the perfection, his needs become independent of the slaves by the Lord, and regard gold and dust as equal.
- A seeker is one who observes limits or law of the Lord, be mindful of His promises, is contented with what he has, and has patience when deprived.
- A seeker is one who is thankful and grateful upon the favours of Allah, endures trials and afflictions patiently, is content with the bitter decrees, praises his Lord in times of ease and hardship, and remains true to Him secretly and openly.
- A seeker is one who is not enslaved to others (except Allah), neither attached to rank and status or desires any material forms.
- A seeker is neither vanquished by lower desires [*nafsu*] or ambitions nor dominated by habits or culture. His words are invocation and wisdom.
- His silence is filled with reflection and heeding to examples.
- His actions and deeds precede his words and are proof of his knowledge. His marks are reverence and gravity.

- His clothes are humility and modesty.
- He follows truth and prefers it.
- He rejects falsehood and denies it.
- He loves the best of people and is their ally.
- He detests evil people and is their enemy.
- Dealing with him proves him better than what is said about him.
- Keeping his company proves better than talking about him.
- He helps others abundantly, but his own demands are little.
- He is far from frivolousness.
- He is honest and trustworthy neither lies nor betrays.
- Neither is he a miser nor a coward.
- Neither does he insult nor curse.
- He is not concerned with what is not his share, and is not stingy with what he has.
- His inner self is excellence and so are his intentions and opinions.
- He keeps a distance from all evil spotlessly.
- He is very intense in the deeds that draw him near to his Lord Most High.
- His desire for life on earth is disdainful.
- He does not repeat his errors.
- Whether he acts or refrains is not due to lustful motives.
- Loyalty and generosity are his companions.
- Modesty and high moral is his trademark.

- He fulfils in full everyone's rights due from him while never seeks to total all his rights due from others.
- When he is given, he is thankful.
- When his rights are withheld, he is patient.
- When he commits an injustice, he repents and asks for forgiveness.
- When an injustice is committed against him, he pardons and forgives.
- He likes to remain unknown and hidden.
- He dislikes prominence and fame.
- He is grieved when his tongue speaks of what does not concern him.
- His heart is saddened by his shortcomings in obeying His Lord.
- He does not compromise in religious matters nor does he please any creation which will cause displeasure to Lord of the Universe.
- He finds solace in isolation and loneliness.
- He finds aversion in mixing with people.
- Whenever you meet him, you find him performing acts of goodness or teaching the knowledge he acquired.
- He is a man from whom people expect goodness, never fear any form of evil from him.
- He does not repay harm with harm nor does he shun those who shun him.
- He is like a palm tree, which throws tender dates at you when you throw stones at it.
- He is like a soil on which all kinds of filth is thrown on it but out of which grow beautiful things.
- The light of truthfulness emerges outwardly from him.

What is seen on his face indicates what is hidden inwardly. He, the seeker, strives and aspires to please his Lord. He is eager and careful to follow his Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, the beloved and chosen one, whom the seeker takes for example in all his affairs and follows in manners, actions and words, in compliance with the command of his Great Lord in His generous and noble Book whereby He, the Exalted, says the following,

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds (or forbidden) from you¹.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا.

You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise and remembrance of Allah².

وَمَن يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

And we who obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah³;

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ

Verily those who plight their fealty to you do no less than plight their fealty to Allah⁴

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Say (O Muhammad) "If ye do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful⁵."

¹ Part of Surah 59 al-Hasyr Verse 7

² Surah 33 al-Ahzab Verse 21

³ First part of Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verse 80

⁴ First part of Surah 48 al-Fath Verse 10

⁵ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 31

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Let those beware who withstand the Messenger's order, lest some trial befall them, or a grievous Penalty be inflicted on them¹.

So you see him extremely careful to follow his Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, obey the command of his Lord, aspire to the generous promise, and flee the threat of suffering (of the afterlife) mentioned in those verses we quoted and those we left out but which carry the same meaning, that is, good tidings of utmost success to the followers of the Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and warnings of utmost shame and disgrace to those who differ from him.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْحَنَّانَ الْمَنَّانَ
بَدِيعَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ أَنْ تَرْزُقَنَا كَمَالَ الْمُتَابَعَةِ
لِعَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ فِي أَخْلَاقِهِ وَأَعْمَالِهِ ظَاهِرًا وَبَاطِنًا
وَتُخَيِّنَنَا وَتُثِمِّتَنَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

O Lord, indeed, we ask You, by Your being Allah whom there being no god but You, the Compassionate, the Bountiful, Designer of heavens and earth, O the One of Majesty and Generosity, to confer on us perfection follow the foot steps of Your servant, Your Messenger, our Master Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be on him, in his character, deeds and actions, in his words outwardly and inwardly; make us live and die according to this upon Your mercy, O the Most Merciful of the Merciful!

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ كَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِجَلَالِ
وَحْهِكَ وَعَظِيمِ سُلْطَانِكَ. سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ. لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

O Lord, all praises and thanks belong to our Lord, abundant fragrant praise full of blessings that befits the Majesty of Your State and the Magnitude of Your Sovereignty. "Glory be to You! Of which knowledge we have none, save what You have taught us: in truth it is You Who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom."¹ "There is no god but Thou: glory to Thee: I was indeed wrong!"²

The author (Imam Alhadad) said, "This treatise is now completed. It is guidance for the seeker, to whom is given firmness, support and right direction, by his Lord, the Praiseworthy, the Glorious. It was dictated, Praise to Allah, in seven or eight nights of Ramadan of the year 1071 from the Hijrah of the Prophet, may the best of blessings and peace be on him. All praises and thanks to the Lord of all Universe.

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 32

² Second part of Verse 87 of Surah 21 Al Anbiyaa

¹ Second part of Surah 24 Verse 63